

Emerald Publishing Guide for Chinese Authors

Dr Lucy Lu
Academic Director – MBA Programme
Director of China Programme
Newcastle University Business School
yang.lu@newcastle.ac.uk

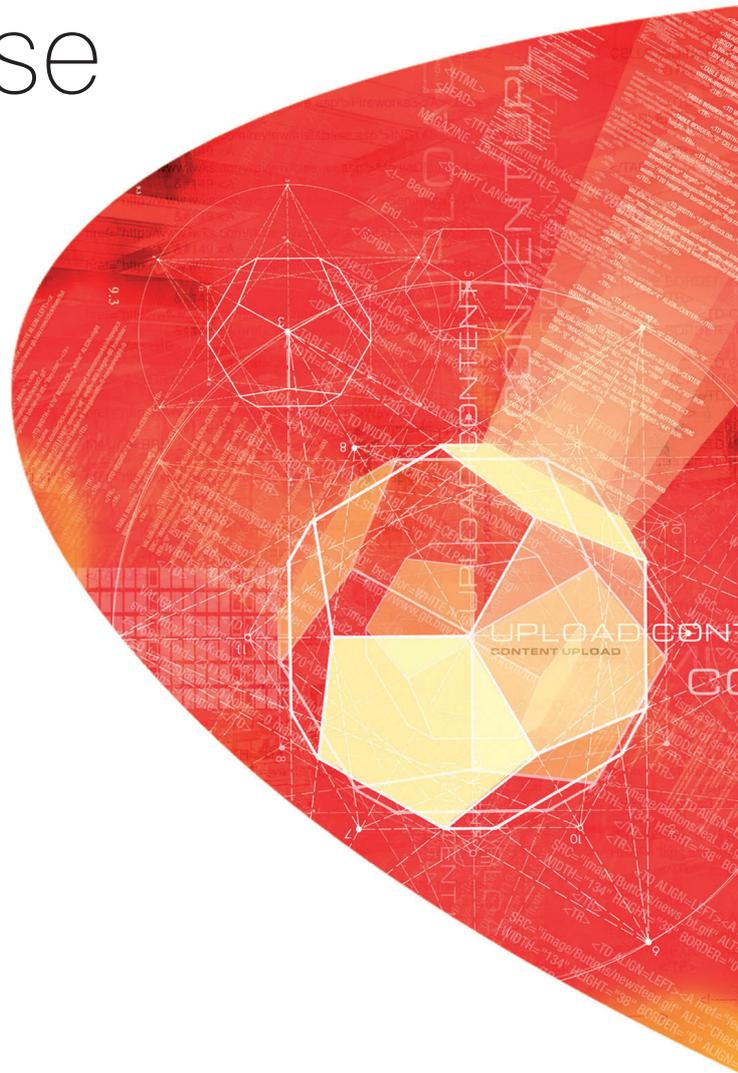


Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Preparing an academic paper	3
2.1 Understanding the publishing process	3
2.2 Identifying the most relevant journal and content	4
2.3 Planning and organization	5
2.3.1 Choice of topics and supporting materials	5
2.3.2 Single author or collaboration?	5
2.3.3 Joint authorship	5
2.3.4 The challenges of collaborative research	5
2.3.5 Timing	5
2.3.6 Following the Emerald house-style guidance	5
2.4 Differences in the academic style between East and West	6
3. Writing an academic paper	6
3.1 Where to start	7
3.2 Different types of research and academic papers	7
3.2.1 Different types of research	7
3.2.2 Different academic papers	8
3.3 Creating a structured abstract	8
3.4 How to write a literature review	8
3.5 Designing an appropriate research strategy	9
3.6 Academic structure and writing style	9
3.7 Key issues and policy agendas	10
4. Submitting an academic paper	10
4.1 The cover letter	10
4.2 Communicating with Editors (reviewers)	10
4.2.1 Role of Editors	10
4.2.2 Role of reviewers	10
4.3 Responding to reviewers and resubmission	11
5. Author's check-list	11
6. Emerald A-Z of academic journal writing guide	11
7. Key references and further readings	14

1. Introduction

Established in 1967, Emerald has grown into an important journal publisher on the world stage. The company currently publishes over 180 journals and employs over 180 people. Emerald has always stressed the importance of internationality and relevance to practice in its publishing philosophy. These two principles remain the corner-stones of our editorial objective.

As an internationally recognized publisher, Emerald is keen to encourage new product development in emerging markets such as China. The *Journal of Technology Management in China (JTMC)*, officially launched in 2006, marked a milestone in the new strategic direction of Emerald in further enhancing its international profile, linking organizations and academics across the globe. The successful launch of *JTMC* has been followed by a number of new China-focused journals, including *Chinese Management Studies*, *Journal of Chinese Economics and Foreign Trade Studies*, and the *Journal of Knowledge-based Innovation in China*. Whilst these have created significant opportunities for international research collaboration, there are still barriers and difficulties for Chinese scholars in getting published in international journals. These are centred on the different academic background, educational system and philosophical approach that underpin the process of research and academic viewpoints in the papers. This Chinese author guide aims to provide practical guidance for Chinese academics and researchers who are seeking either to develop their international profile by publishing in Emerald journals or to enhance their knowledge of collaboration with Western researchers.

2. Preparing an academic paper

Writing papers is an essential task for researchers, academic scholars and young postgraduate/PhD students who are seeking an academic career in higher educational institutions. For most academics, the key reasons for getting published are:

- *Recruitment to an academic institution* – this is particularly important for young researchers who are seeking an academic career in universities or research institutions
- *Promotional opportunities in academic institutions* – in the UK, because of the RAE (research assessment exercise) ranking, universities not only are seeking academics with a high volume of publication, but also encouraging their staff to publish in top journals (see *ABS Journal Quality Guide*, www.the-abs.org.uk/?id=257)
- *Establishing an academic profile* – it is particularly important for an academic to establish his/her international profile by publishing widely in reputable international journals
- *Institutional status building* – it is important that academics are published to help promote and develop their institution's status at a national and international level.
- *Self-learning and contribution to knowledge* – although enhancing one's personal academic profile is important, self-learning and contribution to knowledge creation are two of the key outcomes of getting published in top journals.

2.1 Understanding the publishing process

There are two major parts of the publishing process: writing (before submission) and revision (after submission).

1. *The writing process* includes: collecting ideas, deciding on research topics, defining research objectives; creating an abstract; writing the first draft
2. *The revision process* includes: analysing reviewers' comments and key points; revising relevant chapters/contents; writing a cover letter explaining where changes are made and/or areas remain unchanged

The writing and rewriting process (review process) are dealt with in sections 3 and 4. However, it is important for authors to understand the complexity of the publishing process and the time and effort involved. Figure 1 shows the process of getting published:

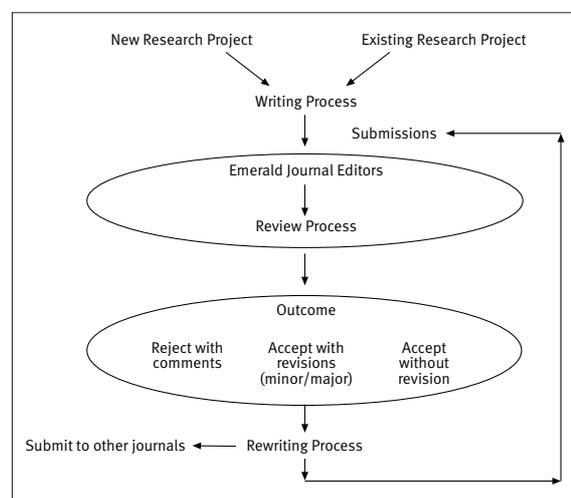


Figure 1: The publishing process

Although it may look simple from the flow chart, experience indicates that it usually takes one or two years to have a paper accepted by a reputable journal and get published finally in hard copy, as the Editors of these journals may receive many papers from around the world every day. It is not unusual for you to receive comments from the Editor three months after your submission. Therefore it is always wise to have a publishing plan for yourself including the following:

- How long will I spend on writing? – set a deadline for completing the paper
- When will I send the paper to the targeted journal Editor? – set a date for submission
- When should I remind the Editor if I don't receive a reply? – journal Editors are usually engaged with other academic responsibilities and sometimes your paper could be overlooked in their mailbox. It is always useful to set yourself a date of reminder if you do not receive an initial reply from the Editor(s) within three weeks of submission
- If the paper is accepted with (minor/major) revisions, how long will I spend on revision? When people have submitted the paper to the journal it is easy for them to mentally “switch off” from the project and devote themselves to a new task. Sometimes it can take a couple of months for people to “switch on” again and start the revision process. Therefore setting a deadline for yourself is critical in order to finish the project as soon as possible
- If the paper is rejected, will I continue submitting to the same

journal (after rewriting), or target other journals? – it can be very disappointing when a “reject” decision is received after months of hard writing. However, a decision still needs to be made as quickly as possible as to how to proceed, rather than to abandon the paper.

Understanding the publication process is useful in terms of establishing an overall publishing plan and managing the process of academic publishing. Often, the key issue facing academics is not only what to write, but also where to send the paper; therefore identifying and selecting the most suitable journal is also important.

2.2 Identifying the most relevant journal and content

Selecting the right journal requires some market research. Carry out an initial search by broadly reviewing the titles of journals – this usually gives an idea of the areas of topics/themes/specialists covered by the journal.

After selecting a number of journals that are broadly within your research interests, you need to read through in detail about the journal content and article style as well as the target themes sought by the Editors of the journals. By doing so, you will be able to concentrate your mind on the styles of articles you are going to write and general themes/topics for your research.

Just as you do not want to waste your time sending your article

to journals that are not in your research areas, journal Editors also do not want to waste referees’ time reviewing papers which are poor in quality. It is therefore important to read carefully the journal homepage which outlines the purpose of the journal and the broad thematic headings covered by the journal articles. An example of a journal’s homepage is shown in Figure 2.

Understanding the general topics covered by the journal is not enough; you may also need to take time to read a couple of issues in order to identify the trends of research development and general writing styles associated with a particular journal. By reading the articles and research debates within the journal, you may also be able to identify the publishing intentions and research trends in the future. When looking for the most suitable journals, the following questions need to be considered:

1. Who are the authors?
2. What are the key research methodologies? – qualitative or quantitative or case studies?
3. What are the key areas of argument/debate?
4. Are the papers based on empirical data or theoretical opinion?
5. What are the key conclusions drawn from these papers?
6. What are the messages from the Editor in special issues (usually within the Editorial section)?

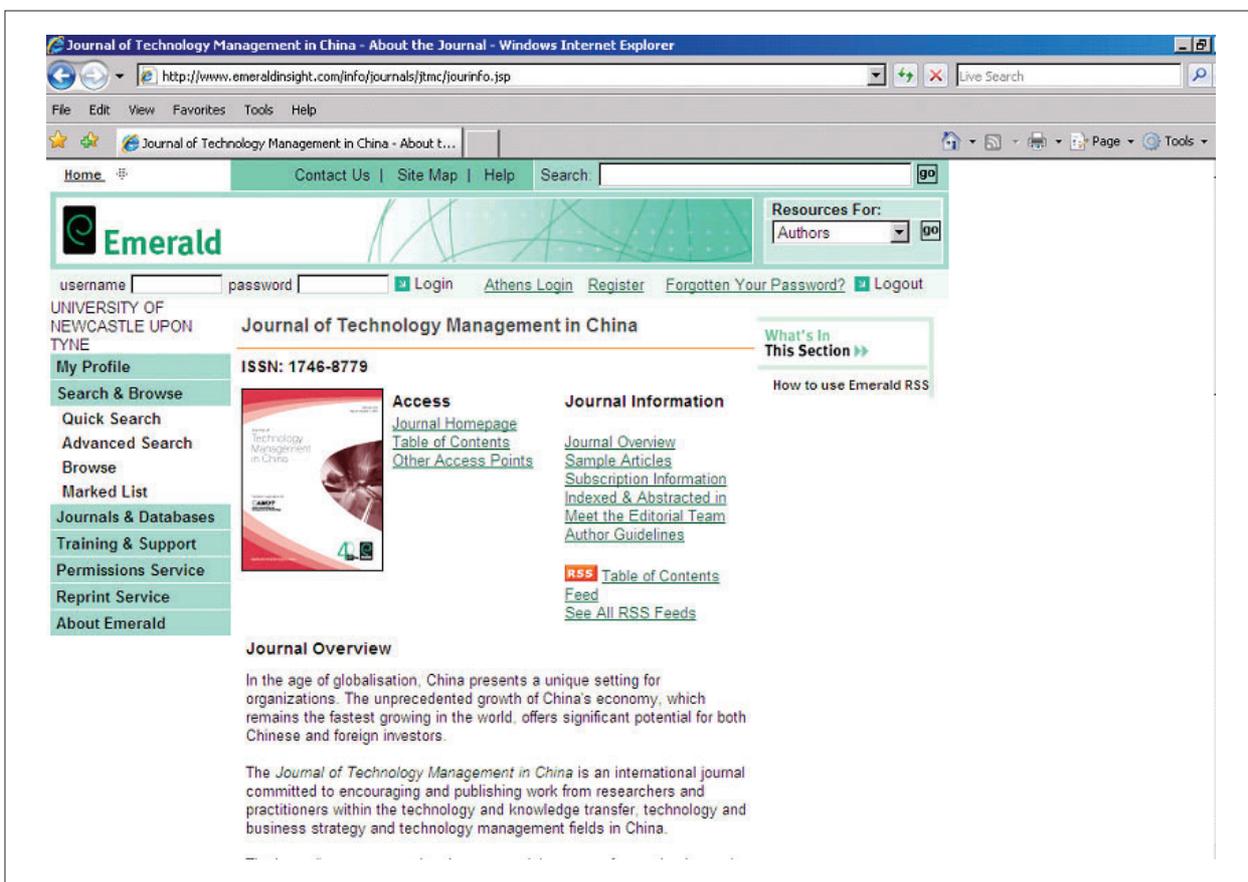


Figure 2: An example of a journal overview

2.3 Planning and organization

It is very rewarding to publicize interesting findings when research projects have been completed successfully. However, before you start writing, there are several issues that need to be considered:

2.3.1 Choice of topics and supporting materials

All research-based qualifications are founded on the choice of appropriate topics and the selection of appropriate supporting evidence from numerous raw data collected from the research field. For a large research project funded by relevant research institutions or councils, it is not advisable to limit all your key findings or arguments to one journal paper. It is important that you divide the research project into a couple of sub-projects, each focusing on different thematic topics and empirical evidence to support the argument.

2.3.2 Single author or collaboration?

The decision whether to take on single authorship or collaborate with other academic colleagues will be subject to a number of factors. As a single author, you will be responsible for the whole research project, from conducting research to writing up. And of course you are the owner of the intellectual property and the knowledge generated from the research. However, the downside of being a single author also cannot be ignored. In particular, how you will ensure the quality of the paper and allocate resources, as well as organizing the writing process will become an issue. In addition, research is a process of reconstruction of existing theories and practice through critical and systematic thinking – innovative ideas are more likely to be generated through peer reviews, feedback and continuous interactions between academics. From this perspective, joint authorship through collaboration may be considered.

2.3.3 Joint authorship

For many Chinese academics who are seeking to get published in an international journal, it will be a good opportunity to collaborate with an experienced author from an English-speaking country such as the UK, USA, Canada, etc. Not only will you benefit in terms of improving the quality of your English writing, but also your collaborators will gain experience of conducting a research project in another social, cultural and political environment. Collaborating with a Western author will also help you to:

- Access international academic networks
- Improve your international academic profile
- Enhance your knowledge of conducting different research projects
- Learn another academic culture.

There are no fixed rules for academic collaboration and individual academics tend to collaborate in different forms through joint research funding applications, conducting comparative research, or exchanging and developing research ideas. Although collaboration with a Western author sounds fascinating, there are still many challenges facing Chinese scholars including joint-responsibilities, awareness of different cultures, communication barriers, disagreement on research issues etc.

2.3.4 The challenges of collaborative research

The challenges of collaborative research may be varied; however the fundamental issues facing the collaborative partners are based around trust and responsibility.

Trust means that you believe that the knowledge gained from such a collaboration will be much richer than from individual efforts. Therefore, you need to be active in sharing your own knowledge with others as well as accepting others' ideas. Developing a relationship of trust requires time as well as mutual understanding between collaboration partners.

Joint responsibilities require every author to contribute to the publishing process and the final version of the paper. It is often the responsibility of the first author to write, revise and submit the final version for review, and other contributors are responsible for collecting data and discussing the research content to ensure the quality of the final work. When academics collaborate in large research projects which may cover different themes/topics, different participants can take the responsibility of first author with the support and cooperation of other colleagues when developing journal papers based on the research project.

There can occasionally be a communication barrier as a result of different academic cultures. Though there is no short-cut in understanding different ways of working, there are a number of tips which may be helpful for Chinese authors when collaborating with Western colleagues:

- Be clear regarding who is doing what and reach an early agreement
- Negotiate and agree on the working timetable including task/deadline
- Be prepared to listen and accept different opinions
- Be straightforward with your own thoughts with reasonable justification
- Be strict on meeting deadlines
- Do not be over-sensitive.

2.3.5 Timing

Developing a research schedule is a useful tool in ensuring that research activities meet the publishing deadline. A Gantt chart (example shown in Table I) is a very useful tool for researchers when monitoring the progress of the project.

2.3.6 Following the Emerald house-style guidance

Emerald has developed a house-style for submitted academic papers. The manuscript requirements include:

- Length of the article – usually between 4,000-6,000 words
- Font: 12 font with double line spacing and 25mm margins
- A brief autobiographical note including full name, affiliation, e-mail address and full international contact details
- Article title
- Author names and affiliations
- A structured abstract of no more than 250 words (see 3.3)
- Format of body text
- Reference style

Activities	January				February			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Week number								
Reading literature								
Draft abstract								
Draft literature review								
Research on methodology literature								
Define research approach								
Draft research strategy and data collection techniques								
Develop interview/questionnaires								
Pilot study/test research questions								
Initial analysis								
Revise research questions								
Conducting main study								
Summarize research notes								
Analyze data								
Writing findings chapter								
Updating literature chapter								
Writing conclusion								
Send to colleagues for review								
Revise and finalize format/references								
Submit to the Journal Editor								

Table 1: Gantt chart for a research project

- Appendices
- Tables/figures.

Further information on manuscript requirements can be found at:

www.emeraldinsight.com/info/journals/jtmc/notes.jsp
www.emeraldinsight.com/info/authors/writing_for_emerald/submissions.jsp

2.4 Differences in academic style between East and West

The methods of conducting academic research in the East and West are very much influenced by the social, cultural, political and institutional development of the nations. In general, the Chinese culture is classified as “collectivism” whereas the Western culture tends to be more focused on “individualism”. Whilst Chinese people value group work, place great emphasis on personal relationships with colleagues and tend to avoid raising different opinions to prevent potential offence, Western academics care more about “truth” and “facts” which are perceived as unconnected with personal relationships. The communication style for the majority of Chinese academics is more implicit than explicit. Whilst e-mail has been regarded as an essential communication tool for day-to-day working, the traditional academic culture still values face-to-face and telephone communication during work.

The academic traditional culture places high expectations on “teachers” and students are not used to arguing with “respected teachers” during class. Therefore, when writing

academic essays, there are few arguments or critical analysis on the literature which has been developed by famous scholars. In addition, the implicit method of communication, particularly in the Chinese language environment, results in the Chinese way of constructing “academic journal papers written in English”. The Western academic encourages clear points or statements at the very beginning, followed by evidence/data/analysis/discussions to support the statement. However, owing to the influence of Chinese culture, some Chinese academics write journal papers with Chinese structures, but in English.

It should also be noted that Western academics value “objectivity” and “independence” of research. The statement or conclusions are the results of critical analysis and logical design and organization of the project rather than a result of personal feeling and reasoning.

In order to improve the chance of getting published in an international academic journal, developing the appropriate academic style is an important task. Reading more Western academic journals and practising academic writing in English are essential for Chinese academics who are seeking to develop their international profile.

3. Writing an academic paper

A research paper is a piece of academic writing that requires a more abstract, critical, and thoughtful level of inquiry than that to which you may be accustomed. The purpose of writing a journal paper is to reflect the experiences of researchers in

conducting both research activities and critical thinking processes.

Writing an academic paper is more a recursive than a sequential process. Not only does it take a lot of time to actually “sit down and write”, but also time is also needed to “continuously think” and “organize information and ideas”. This section will explore the process of writing an academic paper including how to start, differentiate between different types of research, what constitutes a good abstract, how to conduct a critical literature review, how to design the appropriate research strategy and develop valid arguments based on the empirical data or theoretical analysis.

3.1 Where to start

Before you start writing, always ask the “W” and “H” questions:

1. What is the paper about?
2. What is the key statement?
3. What is the research method?
4. What is the supporting evidence?
5. Where can I find the resources (primary, secondary)?
6. How is research conducted?
7. What is the contribution to knowledge?
8. What are the policy implications?
9. Who will be the readers for the paper?
10. How long am I going to take to finish the paper?
11. With whom am I going to collaborate/(or seek advice from)?
12. Which journal am I going to target?

You may not have the definite answers to all the questions, but as a useful technique you may write down any ideas, key words, information or issues needing to be solved on a piece of paper. You may also discuss your work plan with your colleagues in order to articulate your thoughts. It is also useful to know where you may find the relevant information and resources such as

databases, research websites, newspapers, reports, conference proceedings, government publications, etc.

3.2 Different types of research and academic papers

Although journal papers may cover editorials, commentaries, book reviews and interview features etc., academic papers based on research still constitute the major content of the academic journals.

3.2.1 Different types of research

The types of academic papers are usually informed by different types of research. Easterby-Smith *et al.* (1991) classify research into three main categories: pure research, applied research, and action research.

The key nature of *pure research* is that it is intended to lead to theoretical development; there may or may not be any practical implications. Within pure research, there are three key forms. The characteristics of each form are illustrated in Table II.

The pure research (also called basic research) aims to

- Expand knowledge of business and management processes
- Result in universal principles relating to the process and its relationship to outcomes
- Generate findings of significance and value to society in general.

The second type of research is applied research, which is intended to lead to the solution of specific problems and usually involves working with clients who identify the problems. Sometimes the researchers may be paid as management consultants. The main aim of applied research is to:

- Improve understanding of a particular business or management problem
- Result in a solution to the problem
- Generate findings of practical relevance and value to

Forms of pure research	Characteristics	Examples of topics
Discovery	A totally new idea emerging from empirical research, which might revolutionize thinking on that particular topic	Hawthorne Effect Finding: social conditions have a major impact on productivity and work behaviour
Invention	A new technique or method is created to deal with a particular kind of problem. Based on the experience of practitioners rather than intensive field work	Scientific Management (Taylor, 1947) Total Quality Management (Walton, 1989)
Reflection	Existing theory, idea or technique is examined, possibly in a different organizational or social context	To what extent can Herzberg’s motivation theory, developed in the US, be applied to the UK, or Chinese companies? To what extent, can the Chinese Guanxi (relationships) be applied in the Western context?

Table II: Different forms of pure research

managers in organizations (source: Saunders *et al.* (2007), *Research Methods for Business Methods*, FT Prentice-Hall).

The third type, called action research, typically starts from the idea that the researchers and/or participants would like to change or improve a situation; thus research is needed to provide justification or a formal account in order to impose changes. The benefit of action research lies in the fact that both researchers and participants are active learners during the process of research in order to address the issues, problems or deficiencies within the existing management and organizations.

3.2.2 Different academic papers

Based on different forms of research, the research papers may be classified broadly in two types: theoretical-oriented and empirical-oriented. The **theoretical-oriented** paper is driven by the researcher's own understanding, evaluation and interpretation of existing theories in order to develop his/her own stance on an argument or particular issues. Theoretical-driven papers can be further classified into analytical and persuasive papers.

The **empirical-oriented** paper tends to focus on the particular real-world issues or specific problems in order that new knowledge can be created and added to the existing body of knowledge. Empirical research papers usually start by challenging the assumptions underlying existing theories, followed by the design and implementation of empirical data collection to support/verify hypotheses. Empirical-oriented papers may even be further divided into qualitative and quantitative approaches based on the different research design and data collection methods (see 3.5).

3.3 Creating a structured abstract

The abstract or annotation enables a researcher to distil and articulate the research project into a concise and clear summary. Emerald has specific requirements on how the abstract should be constructed. In order to complete the abstract, the following sections are mandatory:

- The aims and objectives of the paper
- The research strategy and methodology employed
- The statement of the findings
- The originality/value of the paper.

Abstracts should contain no more than **250** words. Table III is an example of a structured abstract.

The shaded areas (Research limitations/implications, Practical implications) are sections which may be used but which are not mandatory.

Further information on creating a structured abstract can be found at:

www.emeraldinsight.com/info/authors/writing_for_emerald/abstracts.jsp

3.4 How to write a literature review

The purpose of conducting a literature review is to develop a thorough understanding of, and insight into, previous research that relates to your research question(s). The literature review will:

- Enrich your knowledge in the research subject

Heading	Abstract text
Purpose	Examines the effects of incentives on industrial productivity in China's food industry. Seeks to determine whether economic reform, promoted in China from 1979, has brought significant changes to industrial enterprises at a provincial level.
Design/methodology/ approach	Uses data covering the 1990-1996 period collected from 30 food enterprises in Guangdong Province – a province given more economic freedom than others in China. Employs the Cobb-Douglas production technology method which explores changes of production behaviour over time to estimate an aggregate production function.
Findings	The empirical results support the use of bonus schemes to motivate enterprises to achieve higher levels of productivity. They also indicate an important variable affecting productivity: the proportion of temporary workers in the total labour force. Flexibility in the use of temporary workers could produce a positive effect on enterprise productivity.
Research limitations/implications (if applicable)	
Practical implications (if applicable)	Strongly supports the need for flexibility in employment policies. When compared to state-owned and collective-owned enterprises, their counterparts, e.g. foreign ventures and joint-stock enterprises, were relatively more efficient in production.
What is original/value of paper	Confirms the observation that, entering the 1990s, China's economic growth was largely attributable to the emergence of an energetic non-state sector

Table III Example of a structured abstract

- Define your research boundaries
- Put your research into context
- Provide background and justification for the research undertaken

paragraphs by using various supporting evidence and finally drawing conclusions. Chinese academics, however, are used to the style of “brush painting” and usually do not get to the point directly, which often affects the overall structure and the logical presentation of the paper.

Although most Chinese academics have been learning English since high school, writing a good academic paper requires a very high standard of comprehension in particular theories and issues in order to make a sound argument and analysis. Often, these theories related to management or economics were developed in the Western context and written in English; therefore special attention needs to be paid to the English language of the paper. One way of achieving this is through collaborating with researchers from English-speaking countries, so that the content of the paper can be checked to avoid any mistakes.

Further information about the correct style and structure of a paper can be found in the “Emerald A-Z of academic journal writing guide” (see section 6).

3.7 Key issues and policy agendas

As one of the world’s leading English language publishers for academics, researchers and professionals, Emerald strongly encourages papers that put theories into practice and seeks to publish high quality papers which have direct application to the work of organizations.

However, practical implications from the research need to be developed based on well-defined research issues, the appropriate research design and strategies, critical analysis of data, logical lines of reasoning and valid conclusions.

It is strongly recommended that authors who intend to choose **sensitive topics** for research in relation to China issues carefully consider the areas of research and make an initial enquiry by e-mailing the research proposal or abstract to the journal Editor(s). The journal Editor will inform you whether the topics you have chosen would fit into the themes within the Journal and will provide you with further guidance on the selection of appropriate topics.

Further enquiry can also be made to Dr Richard Lihua, Emerald Adviser (China): Richard.lihua@ncl.ac.uk or Emerald’s Author and Editor Support Executive, based in our Beijing office, at edit@emeraldinsight.com.cn

4. Submitting an academic paper

Writing a paper does not guarantee publication in the Journal. There are a number of important tasks that you need to consider and follow when submitting your papers.

4.1 The cover letter

When sending the revised copy to the Editors, it is also important to list all changes you have made in a cover letter with reference to where/what changes have been made. This will speed up publication of your paper and avoids the possibility of getting into protracted correspondence between yourself, the Editor and the reviewers (also see section 4.3).

When submitting the final version of the paper, the author must also submit a completed Journal Article Record form (which can be downloaded from www.emeraldinsight.com/jarform), explaining the transfer of the copyright of the paper. By

completing and signing the form, you agree that Emerald can publish your work legally.

4.2 Communicating with Editors (reviewers)

4.2.1 Role of Editors

In short, journal Editors are responsible for deciding and maintaining the quality of editorial content in the journal. Editors are also concerned with the balance of articles and the journals as a whole. Communicating effectively with the journal Editor is an essential part of the publishing process. This process may take two or three months or even longer. Whilst most of the authors expect a quick decision on whether the paper is acceptable or not, it would be wise to plan your communication process step-by-step, as illustrated below:

- Send your final copy of the paper with all required documents to the Editor, along with an e-mail requesting a notification of receipt. Most Editors will reply to your e-mail in one or two days.
- It usually takes two to three weeks (sometimes even longer, depending on the academic responsibilities of the Editors) for the Editors themselves to review your paper and provide initial feedback. The suggestions could be one of the following:
 - o Thanks for your contribution to the Journal. However, your research topic does not fit in the scope of our Journal, so we therefore recommend that you submit your paper to other journals
 - o Thanks for submitting your research paper. Having reviewed your work, we felt that the paper needs to be further developed in the following areas. We therefore would recommend you to revise the paper and submit again, once it is completed.
 - o Thanks for submitting your work. Your paper will be passed on to our Journal reviewers. We shall get in touch with you again, once we receive the comments from the reviewer.
- The review process can take between one and three months. However, Editors will usually set up deadlines for receiving feedback from reviewers. If you do not receive a reply within three months, do request an update.

4.2.2 Role of reviewers

Reviewers have expertise in the research areas covered by the Journal and are trusted by the Editors to make assessments and recommendations on the papers submitted to the Journal. All high quality journals adopt a double-blind review process to provide authors with an independent and fair assessment on the intellectual merits of the work. In general, reviewers seek the following areas when considering whether the paper is publishable:

- **Relevance of the themes:** is the content of the paper relevant to the editorial aims and scope?
- **Originality and contribution:** does the paper demonstrate originality of theory, practice, viewpoints?
- **Clarity of thematic focus:** is the research clearly focused? Does the paper address the key research issues cohesively and systematically?
- **Understanding of relevant literature:** does the paper

demonstrate sufficient understanding of the existing theories and conduct critical analysis of the key argument?

- **Research design and data:** does the author explain clearly the research design, research strategies adopted and data collection techniques?
- **Clarity of conclusions:** are the conclusions of the paper clearly stated and synthesized?
- **Policy implications:** does the paper have practical value and implications for decision makers, and/or business practitioners?
- **Attraction to international audiences:** will the statement/argument presented in this paper attract international audiences? Does the paper have values that are recognized widely?
- **Quality, style and presentation:** does the paper have a sound writing style with a high standard of English language and well-organized structure?

Although authors do not have the opportunity to communicate with reviewers directly, addressing the points above will help improve the chance of obtaining positive feedback from the reviewers.

4.3 Responding to reviewers and resubmission

The decision received from the Editors (and reviewers) is usually in two categories: Accept (or with minor/major corrections) and Reject. Whether the decision is positive or negative, there is always something which can be learned from the comments provided by reviewers.

If you have received a **positive decision**, it will increase the likelihood and speed of publication if you follow the steps below:

1. Thank the Editor, expressing your appreciation of their effort and assistance.
2. Set yourself a deadline for resubmission of the revised paper.
3. Read through the comments from the reviewer carefully and check each point against the relevant part of the paper. Make the amendments and then review again the points which you do not intend to change.
4. In a cover letter, list all the changes you have made and note where they appear in the revised paper. If you have decided not to follow the reviewer's point, explain why.
5. Making changes according to the reviewers' comments is important; however, you do need to keep the balance between improving the quality of the paper and changing the paper to a different one in order to satisfy the reviewers.

You may occasionally receive contradictory advice from reviewers. One reviewer might say that a particular idea is not central to the paper and should be deleted. Another reviewer might say the opposite. As the author, you need to take each reviewer's comments very seriously and try to revise the paper with a view to improving its overall logic and coherence. If you decide to follow one reviewer and not another, you need to explain this clearly in the cover letter sent to the Editor.

However, not all academic papers get published, regardless of how worthy they are; they may fail to meet sufficiently the high standards of presentation or academic content. At least 50 per

cent of papers in business management do not get published. Dealing with rejection itself is a learning process and the most important thing is what you can learn from the comments. This can help you improve your paper and increase the chance of getting published in the future.

One of the best ways of dealing with rejection is to have a fallback plan – this is why identifying and selecting a number of target journals is important. You may send the revised paper (even though it is rejected by one journal) to another target publication. Most papers get published eventually in one form or another as long as the author is not too despondent about the “reject” decision.

5. Author's check-list

Authors should review the following points before final submission:

- You have written a structured abstract, including
 - o Clearly stated purpose of research
 - o Well-defined research strategy and approach
 - o Brief summary of essential findings
 - o Theoretical/practical implications
- You have conducted a wide literature review with focused and critical analysis of key issues
- You have formed a research framework that guides research questions (or leads to hypotheses being examined) based on the literature review
- You have explained the rationale of research strategy and detailed research process and data collections (research scope, sample size, reliability and validity tests or other measures). Quantitative research needs to include clear descriptions of the instruments used and the types of intervention employed in the study.

You have presented and interpreted the key research findings and provided discussions and analysis on how the research findings relate to current research/theory and concepts in the field. (For quantitative research, authors need to discuss how the assumptions underlying the research design were met.)

6. Emerald A-Z of academic journal writing guide

Autobiographical note (also see submission): a brief autobiographical note should be supplied when submitting your final paper including full name, affiliation, e-mail address and full international contact details.

Abstract: the abstract should be structured to include the purpose of the paper, research design and methodology, key findings and originality/value. The abstract should be no more than 250 words.

Apostrophes: learn how to use them. An apostrophe is used in one of two ways: to represent missing letter or letters (e.g. is not becomes isn't); or to indicate possession (e.g. the organization's structure). For the exception to this latter rule, see its/it's.

Bullet points: can be useful but should not be overdone. Useful as a presentation device but should not be used in place of judgment or analysis. Presenting points only as bullets suggests that they are all of equal importance.

Case study evidence: be aware of the uses and limitations of

case study evidence. Case studies should be used as illustrations and investigation of the research questions rather than as proof. On the different types of case study and what we can get out of them, see Yin, R.K. (2003) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 2nd ed., Sage.

Conclusions: the conclusion is a very important part of the paper (see also **introduction**). The precise form it takes will vary according to the nature of the academic paper and your research questions, but it can be used for one or more of the following purposes:

- To summarize your main argument in the academic paper.
- To provide an explicit statement and answer to your research questions.
- To suggest implications for the analysis, limitations of current research and indicate directions for future research.

There are some types of conclusion that should be avoided. Among these are:

- **The uneasy compromise.** This involves a conclusion which, having seen merit in both sides of an argument, claims that the truth must lie somewhere between. This might be the case but it is not self-evident. The argument has to be made.
- **The unsupported contingency.** Here, a writer unwilling to commit him/herself to one side or another, will argue along the lines of "what suits one organization will not necessarily suit another: it all depends". Again, this might be a valid argument but the case has to be made. What aspects of the organization are important in determining suitability? And, just as importantly, is this a theme that has been developed in the body of the paper?

Critical evaluation: critical evaluation means that the authors should draw on a range of existing literature, sources and previous research studies to situate their own written work. As a useful preliminary it is helpful to consider different theories, models, studies, sources and/or viewpoints, and to compare (identify the similarities) and contrast (identify the differences) their relative strengths and weaknesses with a clear line of reasoning.

Definitions: the meanings of theoretical concepts need to be clearly defined within the academic paper, especially in areas where there are differing opinions on how the concepts are associated with different meanings.

Figures: these should be used when they make it easier for a point to be understood. What the figure shows should always be explained. In presentation terms, figures can also be used to break up text. They should be large, clear and uncluttered. If you are using more than one figure, give them numbers and refer to the number in the explanation in the text.

Evidence: always try to support your arguments with evidence. This will take a variety of forms, but can include case study evidence, figures and secondary references.

Figures (charts and diagrams) should be used sparingly throughout the article text. They must be produced in black and white with minimum shading and numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals.

Footnotes: now little used. If using the Harvard method (see referencing) there is no need to use footnotes as well.

Introduction: a very important part of the academic paper (see

also conclusions). The introduction should be used to:

- engage the reader by demonstrating the significance of the topic
- help readers understand your assertions
- set up the context for the research topic
- provide an account of the contents of the paper including its main arguments and conclusions.

As with conclusions, there are a number of introductions that should be avoided. Prime amongst these is one that begins along the lines of: "We live in a world of unprecedented levels of competition and rates of technological change". How relevant is this to the question being answered? And what in any case is the evidence to support it?

Internet (also reference electronic sources): exercise care when using web sites rather than material derived from books and journals. In particular, ask yourself what purpose is served by publication of the material. For example, does a consultancy firm have a vested interest in publishing stories of its success? This does not mean that you should not use such references, only that you should be clear about why you are using them.

Its/it's: the one exception to the rules on **apostrophes**. When indicating possession, no apostrophe is required in this case: "the organization and its environment".

Length: observe the word limit (see words) strictly. Doing this forces you to make decisions about what you consider most important in making a sound argument.

Mis-used words: sometimes words do not mean what you think they mean. For an example, look up "turgid" in the dictionary.

Page numbers: always include. Begin page numbers on the first page of the body of the assignment. The title page should be unnumbered.

Paragraphs: within **sections** these are the most important component unit of the papers. The general rule is that each paragraph should make one **main point**. This might be expressed in the **first sentence of the paragraph**. All the rest of the material in the paragraph should relate to the main point, either supporting or qualifying it. Also very important is how paragraphs follow from one another. Very short paragraphs (especially those of one sentence) should be avoided: if the point is important it should be developed; if it isn't, it should be omitted.

Plagiarism: claiming somebody else's work as your own. Don't do it. The Editor may make use of iThenticate or other software to check the originality of submissions received.

Presentation: the submitted paper should be word-processed, double-spaced in **12 pt type and 25mm margins**.

Punctuation: important as a way of conveying meaning. Interest has been revived by the publication of Lynne Truss's *Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* (Profile Books, 2003).

Quotes: when quoting from sources you should observe the following rules:

- Use quotes that express something in an interesting or original manner
- Always give the source of quotes, including the page number

for direct quotes. If you are taking the quote from other than its original source, you need to cite both the original source and from where you are drawing the quote. On the whole, you should try and consult the original source, but if this is not possible you can use the form: "... (Storey and Sisson, 1993, p. 73, cited in Procter and Redman, 2001, p. 240) ...". See also **referencing**

- Avoid both the excessive use of quotes and the use of quotes of great length
- If you must use a long quote (over around 20 words), give it its own paragraph, single-space it, and indent it from the margin.

Readability: good written work uses a good range of vocabulary and sentences with a clear construction, avoiding ambiguity. It uses paragraphs sensibly, to lay out a complete idea, concept or description. Good written work deploys argumentation styles which make the chain of reasoning clear, and descriptive styles which provide a good picture or understanding for the reader. The best written work will flow easily, with grace and style, and will lead the reader effortlessly through the text. It will deploy the full capacity of the written word to convince the reader through both argument and evocation.

References: a reference is any piece of information (e.g. book, journal article, or video) to which the writer of an essay or dissertation refers directly either by quotation or by the author's name. A reference gives information about the source (usually an original source) from which the writer of the essay or dissertation has taken or used material. The purpose of a reference is to enable the reader to locate that information as easily and quickly as possible. Individual references used in the text are, in addition, compiled in a list at the end of a piece of written work.

Referencing: Emerald adopts the **Harvard system of referencing**, which uses the author's or authors' name or names and the date of publication. In the text this should appear as: "As Thompson and Wallace (1996) point out, how groups of people work together is of longstanding interest ..." or as "How groups of people work together is of longstanding interest (Thompson and Wallace, 1996) ...". If there is more than two authors, use "et al." to indicate "and others". Thus rather than "Procter, Rowlinson and Hassard (1995) ...", use "Procter et al. (1995) ...".

For direct quotes (i.e. where you are taking the exact words used) you should also include the page number: e.g. "... Procter and Ackroyd (2001, p. 220) claim that "Flexibility is a concept that can be understood in many different ways and at many different levels ...". See **quotes**.

The sources referred to in the text should then be listed alphabetically at the end. The form in which these references are presented should be along the following lines:

For authored books:

Kamoche, K. (2001), *Understanding Human Resource Management*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes.

For multiple-authored books:

Cully, M., Woodland S., O'Reilly A. and Dix G. (1999). *Britain at Work: As Depicted by the 1998 Workplace Employee Relations Survey*, Routledge, London.

For edited books:

Edwards, P. (Ed.) (1995), *Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice in Britain*, Blackwell, Oxford.

For books in more than one edition (if possible, use the most recent):

Bach, S. and Sisson K. (Eds) (2000), *Personnel Management: a Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed., Blackwell, Oxford.

For journal articles:

Guest, D. and Conway N. (1999), "Peering into the black hole: the downside of the new employment relations in the UK", *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 367-90.

For chapters in edited books:

Buchanan, D. (2000), "An eager and enduring embrace: the ongoing rediscovery of teamworking as a management idea", in Procter, S. and Mueller, F. (Eds), *Teamworking*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, pp. 25-42.

For electronic resources:

A www page with no date

Hine, C. (n.d.), CO3436S *The Social Dynamics of Information and Communications Technologies*, available at www.brunel.ac.uk/~xxctcmh/socdy97a.htm (accessed October 11, 1999).

An electronic journal article

Coffey, A., Holbrook, B. and Atkinson, P. (1996), "Qualitative data analysis: technologies and representations", *Sociological Research Online*, Vol. 1 No. 1, available at www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/1/1/4.html (accessed October 11, 1999).

Spelling: needs to be thoroughly checked, even if you possess a spell checker.

Structure: it is important to have in your mind an idea of the overall structure of your assignment. The structure should reflect your concern to **answer the question** and should be set out in the **introduction** to your assignment.

Tables should be numbered consecutively with roman numerals and a brief title. In the text, the position of the table should be shown by typing on a separate line the instruction "take in Table IV".

Sub-headings: use sparingly. Sub-headings can be used to indicate the main **sections** of the paper, and are thus useful in providing a guide to the overall **structure**. Within each main section, however, the use of sub-sub-headings gives a disjointed feel to the assignment.

Submission: once accepted for publication, the final version of the manuscript must be provided to the Editors as an MS Word e-mail attachment. At this point, the author should supply a completed and signed Journal Article Record form, a blank copy of which is available from the Editors or from www.emeraldinsight.com/jarform

Title page: this should be a separate (unnumbered) page containing the following information: title, name, affiliation, contact details and word count.

Word count: different journals have different required word counts. Information on this can be found on the "author guidelines" webpage.

7. Key references and further readings

- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Lowe A. (1991), *Management Research: An Introduction*, Sage Publications, London.
- Page G., Campbell R. and Meadows J. (1987), *Journal Publishing: Principles and Practice*, Butterworths & Co., Oxford.
- Cooper, H.M. (1989), *Integrating Research: A Guide for Literature Reviews*, 2nd ed., Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA.
- Hart, C. (1998), *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination*, Sage Publications, London.
- Saunders *et al.* (2007), *Research Methods for Business Methods*, FT Prentice-Hall, Hemel Hempstead.
- Bourner, T. (1996), "The research process: four steps to success", in Greenfield, T. (Ed.), *Research Methods: Guidance for Postgraduates*, Arnold, London.
- Yin, R.K. (2003), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 2nd ed., Sage, London.